

# Residents will take part in area study

October 31, 2011

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EAST LIVERPOOL - More than 100 local residents have registered to take part in an upcoming environmental study that will get under way this week to assess the levels of manganese in their bodies.

Funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be used by a large group of investigators and advanced graduate students from the San Francisco State University to conduct the study, headed by Dr. Rosemarie Bowler of the university.

Bowler addressed the city health board in September about the study, saying at that time 60 people had signed up to participate; as of this week, that number had risen to more than 100, she reported.

Those participants all live within a two-mile radius of S. H. Bell, a company that has been identified as a major source of manganese levels which are the highest in the nation.

The testing will take place at the East Liverpool Motor Lodge Nov. 3-6, with participants undergoing neurological, and neuropsychological testing as well as providing small amounts of blood, hair and toenail clippings to be tested for manganese and other chemicals.

According to Bowler, the research group consists of health practitioners and manganese experts from the university as well as from Brussels, Belgium, South Korea and Harvard University, with most of them present on testing days.

Among those will be Dr. Harry Roels, one of the world's experts on manganese, and Dr. Yangho Kim, the first person to detect manganese in brain tissue.

Although manganese is a metal that naturally occurs in rocks, soil and some foods, ingesting or breathing it in high levels over long periods of time can result in problems with the nervous system. In children, it can also lead to learning disabilities and memory loss.

Individuals participating in the testing are adults between 30 and 75 years old who must meet certain criteria, including never having worked at S.H. Bell or Eramet in Marietta - another city in which manganese levels are elevated and where a study was conducted.

Those participants will be given a \$50 gift card and will receive confidential feedback reports once the data is analyzed.

"We thank the town for responding...we really appreciate the response of the community and believe we will be able to give important feedback of the health and potential relationships of manganese to the health of residents. Even if residents are not participating, this information will be helpful to the town," Bowler said in a release this week.

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